

H.B. No. 6800 (Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC BOOK AND DIGITAL AUDIOBOOK LICENSING.

Dear Senator Rahman, Representative Kavros DeGraw, and Honorable Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

My name is Lisa Read. I am a resident of Bolton, and a librarian at the University of Hartford. I am writing in support of H.B. No. 6800, to prohibit publishers of electronic books and digital audiobooks from including certain restrictions in contracts or license agreements with libraries in the state.

As a librarian, I am very much aware of the kinds of licenses and contracts often used by e-book and audiobook publishers. I know that a digital copy often costs many times more than the print version, and additionally comes with many restrictions that would not apply to print books. This is not fair to libraries, and does not provide equitable access to their patrons. In the case of public state libraries especially, these book companies are reaping incredibly high profits at the expense of my and other taxpayers' dollars.

In addition to my work as a librarian, I am also an avid user of the Bentley Memorial Library in Bolton. I know first-hand the effects that predatory licensing practices have on the citizens of this state. When I try to access e-books and audiobooks from my public library, the ones I want are almost always unavailable. I have had to wait weeks and even months before a specific book becomes available. Sometimes I just give up on reading what I want due to the extended wait times.

Knowing what I do about current pricing and licensing, I'm sure my library could have bought multiple copies of a print book for the same price as the e-book, and made it available sooner. But in today's world, we library users expect digital options. Furthermore, some readers need those digital versions due to visual and other disabilities. For those users, accessible digital books are essential. In today's world of mis- and dis-information, it is vital for everyone to be able to access quality information they need in a format they can actually use.

HB 6800 is a crucial step in fighting for fair business practices, responsible use of taxpayer dollars, and equitable information access for everyone in this state. I fervently support this bill, and hope that you and other Connecticut lawmakers will too.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Read
Bolton, CT